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Philippines

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011100--speaker criticizes u.s. senator's
remarks on talks

{h1}Philippines: U.S. Senator's Remarks on Talks
'Unfair'

{s1}HK0108132188 Manila THE MANILA CHRONICLE ON SUNDAY
in English 31 Jul 88 p 1 [tentative]

{txt}[Text] Press Secretary Teodoro Benigno yesterday
called the accusation of Sen. Robert Dole as "manifestly
unfair."

Benigno said Dole "Does not represent the Government
of the United States of America" and his opinion must be
considered as "only his own personal statement."

Dole lost to Vice President George Bush in the choice
of the Republican Party's presidential candidate in the
coming U.S. elections.

"It is very unfair to accuse a man of (Foreign)
Secretary (Raul) Manglapus' integrity and untarnished
prominence of blackmail," Benigno said.

According to Benigno, it was not necessary or
appropriate to obtain a reaction from President Aquino
herself on Dole's statement. "After all, he is only a
senator not a president," he said.

Manglapus refused to comment on Dole's statement.

"I'd rather not comment. I've said enough," he told
the CHRONICLE yesterday.

Manglapus said, however, the Philippine panel in the
bases review "maintains normal contacts with the U.S.
embassy." By normal, he said he meant the relations
were still "courteous, proper and diplomatic."

Asked if Dole's statements were not an affront to the
Philippine panel, Manglapus replied: "He's very much
entitled to his opinion. The United States is a free
country."

But Manglapus did not dismiss Dole's statement
outright. "Everyone in the U.S. Senate is an important
person, an important voice," he said.

Asked when the suspended bases talks would resume, he
said, "At the moment, it's in a state of suspension, but
I am not in a position to comment."

He declined to comment on whether the U.S. panel led
by ambassador Nicholas Platt had indicated it was ready
to increase its compensation offer.

Manglapus also said President Aquino had given
instructions to the Philippine panel on when to ask for
the resumption of talks. He did not elaborate.

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